

Foil this conspiracy against the people

—Spread Language Movement in every direction

Some significant features are noticeable in the situation arising out of the massive movement in West Bengal against the language and education policy of the 'Left Front' Government. The constituents of the ruling Front or the Centre had none imagined that the issue could evoke such a deep response among the people and that the **Committee to Resist Curtailment of Education and Encroachment on Autonomy** could rally under its banner so many leading intellectuals and such vast numbers of people of all sections to build up a protracted resistance movement step by step against this anti-people, disastrous policy. The movement has alerted them and the ruling class has become wary too.

The 'Left Front' has postponed implementation of its decision to eliminate English from primary education by one more year under pressure of the movement. But it has not changed its policy, nor its attitude. The CPI(M) Minister of Education for schools was obviously not in his senses when he bitterly remarked that children going to English medium schools would be deemed to have English as their mother tongue.

The Front's attitude reflected in its measure of devaluing language and literature study in education has not undergone change in the least. Nor has it desisted from subverting autonomy of educational institutions and is carrying on as before with its practice of placing chosen men at the top of schools, colleges, universities and boards in flagrant violation of democratic norms and principles.

Faced with resistance from the people, the Front leaders are taking recourse to deception and tricky manoeuvres. Fearing exposure of their motive they are continually changing their line of argument, as

only befits them, to defend this language and education policy, vilifying the leaders of the movement and misrepresenting its stand. Notwithstanding the advantage of the governmental publicity and the patronage of the ruling class, the Front is, however, failing to feed the people its 'logic'. This is exciting more fury in its leaders and more they are engaging themselves to devise new tricks to pass their policy as 'mass-oriented and scientific'.

In this situation the Congress (I) is making a bid to reap dividends in its petty parliamentary interest, taking advantage of the 'Left Front's' growing estrangement with the people. This party is trying to fish in the troubled waters by raising a hue and cry that culture and education in West Bengal are on the verge of collapse. The contribution of the previous Congress Governments, apart from the present CPI (M) led Front's, in bringing about a steady erosion in the fields of culture and education is but too well known a fact.

While preparations are going on throughout the State for the next (Contd. to page 3)

A few parliamentary and assembly seats have fallen vacant in some states. Elections in these seats are going to be held on 14th June. True, there by-elections will have little effect in bringing about any change either of the Central or the State Governments; but still, to a revolutionary party election is also a political battle. At the existing level of public consciousness it still acts as a means to mobilise the people under the leadership of a genuine revolutionary party, a means to bring home to them the correct

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Organise strong public opinion against British Govt. and force India Govt. to come out of the Commonwealth

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee's letter to left and democratic parties

Dear Comrade,

The death of four Irish Republican Army leaders like Messrs. Bobby Sands, Francis Hughes, Raymond McCreech and O'hara in Maze prison in Belfast, who died martyrs' death, cannot but cause serious concern and deep indignation among the people against the most atrocious attitude of the British imperialist Government and its Prime Minister, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher.

We strongly feel that world public opinion must immediately be organised

and mobilised in such a way which can put the British imperialist Government to dock and mount sufficient pressure to concede to the most legitimate and democratic demands granting political status to the political prisoners for the realisation of which these martyrs fought, and thus protect the cause and save the lives of those who are still conducting a grim battle of hunger strike.

The people of India, who had a long tradition of anti-British freedom

movement and who still cherish with great reverence, the memory of those revolutionaries who sacrificed their lives in India for the same cause at that period, most regretfully note that contrary to the democratic aspirations of the freedom loving people of our country the Government of India has not yet come out even with a formal protest, let alone organising a strong opinion all over the world, against this autocratic (Contd. to page 5)

Make SUCI Candidates Victorious in the ensuing by-election

understanding of the socio-political-economic situation of the country and their task by unmasking the anti-people role of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties. Hence we feel it our bounden duty to analyse the present situation of our country and the task of the people in this election.

Our country is now passing through a grave crisis unprecedented in magnitude and dimension. Indian capitalism is totter-

ing at its feet. The known servitor of the aggregate interest of Indian bourgeoisie, Indira Congress, dished out many colourful promises to the people before the last parliamentary poll. But all these promises have been miserably belied. Prices of all essential commodities are steadily rising. The problem of unemployment has put all previous records into shade. Lay-offs, lock-outs, closure and retrenchments have become matters of regular occur-

ence. But all these notwithstanding, the people are being subjected to the heaviest of tax burdens. In a word people's sorrows and sufferings know no bounds. Public tolerance has practically surpassed all limits. Vehement discontent is boiling in the minds of the people. This fast-growing grievance is finding expression in movements of the students and youths, workers and peasants, no matter under whichever leadership. The capitalist class and its tested representative party the Congress (I) cannot (Contd. to page 4)

Some thoughts on the recent LIC movement

Quite a few serious questions have arisen before the trade union movement of the country after the recent incidents in LIC. If analysed superficially, it would appear that getting two years' arrear bonus was the main problem before the employees and that with the getting of the bonus by virtue of the Supreme Court verdict, the main problem has been solved; at least, one may so conclude logically from the manner the leadership of the LIC employees' unions called off the 14 day long strike immediately after the Supreme Court verdict calling it a big victory. But securing arrear bonus, although an issue, an important issue at that, was not surely the main problem or the principal question before the LIC employees. The main question before them was the preservation of their basic trade union rights against which the government brought down heaviest onslaughts. The Central Government led by Sm. Indira Gandhi by this attack on the LIC employees was testing an attack that is coming on trade union movement of the country as a whole. Revoking the earlier tripartite agreement between the Government and the management and the LIC employees' unions the LIC Ordinance demanded the right to impose unilaterally the wage structure and working conditions upon the employees. If it succeeds, it will bring burial to trade union rights. The Indira Government is moving step by step towards that direction. First, they brought a Gazette Notification in GIC and then brought this Ordinance on LIC. Object of both of these is to snatch away the right of collective bargaining without which trade unions become only in name.

In 1974, Sm. Indira Gandhi introduced compulsory Deposit Scheme calling wage increase responsible for inflations. In 1975 after clamping

Emergency she amended the Bonus Act, took away the rights of trade union movement, in 1977 during the Janata Government the Boothalingam Committee's recommendation, Sm. Gandhi's directive in 1980—'No movement at the hour of crisis of the country', imposition of Essential Services Maintenance Act making movements unlawful in industries declared essential at the free will of the government and lately unilateral imposition of wage structure in GIC by Gazette Notification and the LIC Ordinance (amended) and later fixing the rate of Bonus and DA by Notification taking away LIC from the purview of Industrial Disputes Act—all these came in sequence and behind them all is working an all out design of the Government. The capitalist system, based on earning maximum profit, is today enmeshed in an all out crisis. The capitalist class is trying to put the entire burden of this entire crisis on to the shoulders of the toiling people. And this means, there will be inflation, prices of all essential commodities will go up, but there will be no wage increase—the Government will fix the wage rate, if it wishes it will even cut wages—whatever the Government would think fit, it would force that upon the workers—there will no more be any right for collective bargaining for wage increase and the right to decide working conditions with the owners and managements—in a word, trade unions will merely become signboards. That is why Comrade Pritish Chanda General Secretary, UTUC (Lenin Sarani) immediately after the imposition of LIC Ordinance said that the Indira Government by taking up the autocratic power of unilateral wage freeze and wage cut through the LIC Ordinance has given burial to basic democratic rights of collective bargaining. It is a very dangerous attack against the trade union

movement. Comrade Chanda urged upon the Central trade unions that to speak about workers' interest and to remain a dumb spectator when the very basic rights of trade unions are being snatched away is a crying contradiction. It almost amounts to giving approval to the dark design of the ruling class. He also pointed out that the Government dared bring this LIC Ordinance because of the long practice of opportunism reformism by the so called left parties like CPI and CPI(M) sacrificing the social and political rights of the toiling people for some petty economic gains and other privileges. The central trade unions too are showing cynical approach to basic trade union rights for some governmental privileges and to save the crisis-ridden capitalism. That is why the leadership of the big central organisations led by CPI and CPI(M) though talked big against the LIC Ordinance, delivered fiery speeches inside the parliament but did not come forward to tell the working people to take up the challenge and organise a mighty resistance movement in defence of basic trade union rights.

Let us dwell here a little on the background of the government's move. Both in GIC and LIC there are unions led by both CPI and CPI(M). From 1978 the Central Government, has been denying its obligation contained in the 1974 agreement on payment of bonus. Finally the LIC Amendment Act, was imposed. The CPI union went to the Supreme Court saying that during Emergency, no movement can be organised other than the legal one—the CPI(M) union too followed suit. During the Janata regime the Government was defeated in the Supreme Court and paid bonus for the previous two years—1976 and 1977. But in 1977 the Janata Government imposed a Notification revoking the section pertaining to

bonus. In the meanwhile the period of 1974 Agreement was over and so came the question of organising a new movement with a new charter of demands. But without organising a movement the leadership of both the unions confined the whole question within legalism. The CPI union filed suit in the Allahabad High Court. The CPI(M) leadership also filed suit in the Calcutta High Court but at the same time, noticing the restiveness and pro-movement attitude of the general employees were sermonising on the limitations of the judiciary. They even talked of developing strong movements, since, they said, democracy had been restored during the Janata regime and an atmosphere conducive to movement was created in the country. But between 1977 and 1980, in three years, excepting cease work for an hour or two, on some occasions, they did not develop any protracted movement. Truly speaking the leadership of both the unions waited with the expectation of a favourable verdict from the court. The object of the CPI leadership was to anyhow get bonus for the employees for two years—they want to show it as their victory—but about other serious issues like trade union rights etc. they cared not a bit. The CPI(M) leadership on the other hand was making effort to anyhow make an agreement and get for the employees some economic benefits. Though their object was the same but due to difference in tactics of manoeuvre the rival unions led by CPI and CPI(M) did not want to sit together with the management for discussion on the new charter of demands and CPI(M) took the leading part in this. The talk on charter of demand thus broke, but yet no effective joint movement was organised. The leadership of both the unions remained busy, all the time, claiming each credit for the performances

of their respective pleaders at the Supreme Court. We do not certainly mean to say that it is wrong to fight at the Court of Law. Because, legal battle too is also a part of trade union movement. But a conscious and struggling leadership knows that in this capitalist society the vital interest of the employees cannot get protection from judiciary. And even in particular case to get justice from the court employee's fight at the legal forums must be backed up by strong movement. Because, in a class divided society like ours, law, constitution—all are framed in the interest of the owning class. And when the Government is determined to snatch away the democratic rights enacting laws then even if one can take scope of the loopholes in laws once a while but that can not be for all time. Under the circumstance when the Government is conspiring to tarnish combatibility of the workers and employees' organised resistance, when it is to entrap it within the confines of legal mess enacting laws one after another then should a conscious, militant trade union leadership keep the employees busy in legal discourses without developing movements? Certainly not. But the LIC and GIC leadership did just this. They can by no means make the plea that they failed to grasp the conspiracy of the Government. Because, the Government's objective should have been as clear as day light to any trade union organisation when, in September last year, GIC Gazette Notification was made imposing unilaterally the wage structure. The CPI(M) leadership filed stay petition in the High Court, and when the question of movement came the CPI(M) leadership straightway rejected the proposal and the CPI leadership followed suit on both occasion. The Government's real intention became clear when the Supreme Court issued order (Contd. to page 7)

The CPI(M), to prove its worth to the bourgeoisie, has gone further than Kothari Commission recommendation

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phase of movement against the Government's language and education policy and on other burning issues facing the people, the Front and the Congress (I) have plunged into a mock fight to confuse the real issues and deceive the people. Each is blaming the other for its misdeeds, while both are guilty on the same count.

The justification given earlier by the Front for its language and education policy had been examined by us on several occasions and we had also pointed to the motive and danger of this policy and its identity with the Congress's policy. The more recent inventions of the Front leaders in the name of logic need also to be examined to expose the tricks of their game.

Not long back the CPI (M) Chief Minister of the State, Mr. Jyoti Basu, made a comment that the movement had been launched against his Government's policy of introducing the mother tongue as the medium of instruction. To many people outside it may appear astounding how a person occupying the responsible office of a Chief Minister could stoop so low as to indulge in such sheer falsehood. But this is typical of the CPI (M)'s leaders. To call it just a travesty of truth is to fail to see the deeper design. It reminds of a typical fascist method—hammer a lie on till the lie appears truth.

Mr. Basu and his colleagues are trying to pose the issue in a way as makes appear that the demand for retention of English as the compulsory language at the primary stage is synonymous with a demand for replacing the mother tongue by English as the medium of instruction. These political pastmasters are also suggesting that it is 'Left Front' which is the pioneer in introducing the

mother tongue as the medium of instruction! We would have said 'Bravo! but for their a little too much under-estimation of the people.

It is needless to re-emphasize that the mother tongue, the child's linguistic acquisition since the dawn of his consciousness, should be the medium of instruction in education at all its levels. Language is the concrete form of consciousness and there is no consciousness without language. The child's consciousness begins to take shape in the language with which it is in contact at its early stage of life. Education can be properly and most effectively imparted in this particular language and in nearly all cases this language is the mother tongue of the child. So it is said that the mother tongue should be the medium of instruction and no two opinions could exist on it. To level a false charge against one's critics on an issue as this does not betray only the total weakness of one's stand but a lack of minimal ethical standard in the bourgeois yardstick even.

It is no use, really, asking these wily leaders what the medium of instruction was before they came to power—whether it was not the mother tongue at the primary, secondary and higher secondary level of education. Everybody can ascertain that the mother tongue has been serving as the medium of instruction at the school level in West Bengal for the last four decades, and as the alternative medium for nearly two decades at the university level. Thanks to the 'pioneering role' of the 'Left Front' the craze for admission into English medium schools has aggravated many times in a section of people. And the queerest of it all is that some of these schools are being patronized by Ministers

and leaders of the Front. What else can be expected of those whose business it is today to deceive the people!

We must not, however, lose sight of one important aspect of this issue. The practicability of using a particular mother tongue as the medium of instruction at particular stages of education depends on the language's ability to fulfil the requirements of such use. That is to say, the desirability regarding the mother tongue is universal but the practicability may not be so at all levels. It is a hard reality in our country at present that the mother tongues of most of the linguistic communities have not developed enough to replace English worthily at the highest stages of education, especially in science, medicine, engineering, technology, etc. So, if one wishes to maintain higher studies in these faculties, one has to retain English as the medium of learning at higher stages of education as a historical necessity, making all efforts at the same time to promote development of the mother tongues in order that these may one day replace English without declining the standard of learning.

Before entering into any discussion on the issue of English, however, the basic truth has to be kept in mind that the question of importance of English arises because of the vital place the language has occupied in the national life of the country in the course of historical process. This is where it differs from German, Russian, French, etc. in relation to our specific historical context and requirements.

The vital contribution of English to the development of the indigenous languages should not also be forgotten. All acquainted with the history of growth and development of the modern Indian languages

know this fact. We can come in contact with an advanced thought through an advanced language and when we try to express the same thought in a relatively less developed language it helps development of this underdeveloped medium. The vocabulary, idioms, phrases, styles of expression, etc. of the advanced language interact with the less developed language promoting its growth. English has played exactly this role in regard to the indigenous languages in this land. The necessity for further development of our indigenous languages persists even now, making retention of English in academic and some other spheres all the more necessary till this role is exhausted.

The treatment received by the mother tongue in the hands of its self-styled champions called the 'Left Front' may be recalled in this connection. The mother tongue and English had been compulsory subjects at the degree level in the arts and commerce streams. In the restructured courses of study imposed by the Front's nominated Council of the Calcutta University both languages have ceased to be compulsory. A student is now free to choose any out of a group of 5 languages—namely Bengali, Hindi, English, Nepali and Urdu—and he can obtain the graduate degree even if he fails to pass in the language subject. Comments are hardly necessary on the state of language education at the undergraduate level following this revision in the prevailing academic atmosphere. The question is: does this step provide encouragement to study of the mother tongue even? And, in the background of India's language problems, does not devaluation of English pave the way for surreptitious injection of Hindi? For, many students may opt for Hindi in lieu of the mother tongue because of the high incentives by the Centre for learning it. The conclusion is inescapable that the 'Left

Front' is moving hand in glove with the Centre to impose Hindi surreptitiously on the non Hindi speaking people. We do not minimise the importance of Hindi in any way, but we must understand the consequences of imposition of Hindi in this way. In a multilingual country like ours imposition of one nationality language, Hindi or any other, on all other linguistic communities hurts the linguistic prides of these communities, aggravating the divisive trends in the society and pushing it further toward disintegration. Because, no other language can perform the unifying role English has been playing. On the other, the consequence of forcing out English at this stage to replace it by Hindi, or any other indigenous language for that matter, will be disastrous for the people of all nationalities in the long end. Because, there languages cannot yet play the role English has been playing in various disciplines of knowledge like science, technology etc., and in some other vital spheres. Replacement of English till these languages will have developed sufficiently will inevitably cut out the people from the light of the advancing world of knowledge, crippling their power of thinking in the process. People of all nationalities including the Hindi-speaking people are bound to suffer in consequence and the united struggle of all people against capitalist exploitation and oppression will be hampered. What is necessary, therefore, is to give equal and active encouragement to all the indigenous languages for their growth and retain English for the intervening period.

The instance of how the 'Left Front' is distorting the issue of the mother tongue can be multiplied. Its leaders are quoting Rabindranath, Gandhiji and others to show that these stalwarts spoke in favour of education in the mother tongue. This new line of defence is

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rule out the possibility of these movements, being directed on a correct path. So it is very much hectic to nip these movements in the bud. Hence the inhuman oppression in its ugliest ferocity over these movements, killing hundreds and thousands like cats and dogs in the streets while injuring innumerable others. Coupled with this tyrannical rule has been unleashed a series of out and out autocratic measures, curbing all democratic rights of the people. A state of undeclared emergency prevails everywhere. But the Indira Congress, the faithful agent of the Indian bourgeoisie does not feel itself very much safe in spite of this reign of terror and even after robbing the people of their minimum rights. So in order to give a long lease of life to this decadent capitalist system in our country by frustrating the possibility of an all out offensive of the people against it, the Central Government is out to sow the seed of disunity, among the people. Fratricidal, caste and communal riots throughout the country at the cost of bloodshed of the starving brothers and sisters of a community with those of another are cases in points.

But no less anti-people and discouraging is the role of the CPI(M) led Left Front Government in the West Bengal, Kerala, and Tripura. These Governments are also characterised by imposing a huge burden of tax upon the people, giving free rein to the profiteers and blackmarketeers with the inevitable results of steady spiral in prices, perpetrating brutal attack upon the legitimate movement of the people. Communal tensions are also found to be flaring up in these States as the Hindu-Muslim riots at Krishnanagar in West Bengal and the tribal strife in Tripura.

Of all the anti people policies of the 'Left Front' Government, the language policy pursued by the 'Left Front' in West Bengal tops the list. It has originally been the policy of the Congress. But due to strong anti-Congress sentiment among the people, Congress could not fully implement this policy. According to this policy the students in general will not be properly taught language at all not the mother tongue even. It will deprive the sons of the middle class and poor families of learning English, while keeping this scope intact for those of the rich families. It will thus create two classes of citizens, English knowing minority English denied majority. In a country like ours with English enjoying a unique place of importance in all branches of life, the doors of even competition as regards securing employment and higher education are thus to be shut upon the toiling millions. 'Left Front' Government in West Bengal has posed a grave threat to humanity and civilization by banishing the study of literature all together; for, literature instill into our minds higher ethical values. These higher ethical values are at stake today. This situation has much more worsened due to the indifferent attitude of the Government to and sometimes direct assistance with the growing spate of obscene culture Cabaret dance has been legalised. Shops are found to be mushrooming everywhere.

In such a grim situation of our country the by-elections are going to be held. People have become completely frustrated. They seem to have no faith anywhere and in anybody. But this is only one aspect of the situation. To view it in its other aspects, the people are gradually feeling that all here are not lost, out of

this darkness kindless a ray of hope—the SUCI. All the bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties have deserted the people for reaping dividend in parliamentary politics. This party has not. Reared and nurtured by the great leader of the proletariat Comrade Sibdas Ghosh, this party considers love for the people and character building to be the lifeblood of politics. No matter whether within any parliamentary forum or outside it, this party always organises movements on the basis of the legitimate cause of the people. So victory of this party does not mean the victory of a few power loving leaders, but the victory of the legitimate cause of the people. Therefore, in this elections the people's slogans should be; in order to ensure the victory of the people, make the SUCI candidates victorious everywhere. This is the task ahead, this is the call of the party before the voters.

In West Bengal our Party SUCI has put up candidates in the following constituencies.

Manicktola

Comrade Fatick Ghosh

Jadavpur

Comrade Ajit Sen

Tamluk

Comrade Bimal Jana

Public meeting by National Committee for English in Bangalore

A Public Meeting was organised by the National Committee for English at the United Mission School, Bangalore on 20th May, 1981 to pay homage to the late President of the Committee Mr K N Nagarkatti who Passed away recently. Prof. Dharmalingam, Secretary of the Committee presided over the meeting. Dr S. Shankar Raju, Head of the Dept. of Hindi, University of Madras, Dr. K H Cheluvraj, Head of the Dept. of Political Science, Bangalore University, Com. K. Radhakrishna, Secretary of the Bangalore City Organising Committee of our Party SUCI and Com. T. K. Sathyanarayana Murthy, an important organiser of our Party were invited to speak on the importance of English.

Prof. Dharmalingam told the house as to how Mr. K. N. Nagarkatti fought for the due recognition of English language till the last breath of his life. Reading out from his letter published in DECCAN HERALD local daily, on the death of Mr. Nagarkatti, Prof. Dharmalingam narrated as to how the late President even on his deathbed showed happiness when he listened to the news of the

movement led by the SUCI and intellectuals in West Bengal against the move of the Government to denigrate the role of English.

Dr. K. H. Cheluvraj speaking on the occasion asked, while in the North-Indian States two-language Formula is adopted (Mother-Tongue i.e., Hindi and English) why the burden of three languages on the South Indians? Dr. Shankar Raju stressed that only English should be the official language for the purpose of transactions between the Center and States and between the States. He pleaded for the inclusion of English in the Constitution. Com. Radhakrishna elaborately dealt on the language policy in India and said that the ruling capitalist class was conspiring to cut-off the people from the World of Knowledge by abolishing English and replacing it by Hindi. He then exposed the conspiracy of the CPI(M) led 'Left Front' government to denigrate role of English by abolishing it from the Primary level and making language study Optional at the Degree level. The glorious struggle led by our Party and the educationists,

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Public meeting at Rajgunpur, Orissa

Under the joint auspices of Orissa Spinning Mill workers' Union, Orissa Cement workers Union and SUCI, Rajgunpur Branch, a public meeting was held under the presidentship of Comrade Samar Sarkar on 18.5.81 in front of Orissa Cement, Limited Rly. Gate Maidan at 5 P.M. A procession consisting of more than 200 persons moved in different roads of Rajgunpur and came to the meeting place.

Comrade Sk. Kasim, General Secretary, of Orissa Spinning Mill Workers' Union and

Orissa Cement workers' Union, was the main speaker. Comrade G. N. Tripathi, Secretary, Rourkela Engineering workers' Union, and B. P. Dash, B.C. Mahato and Eadward Barwa, Vice-President of the Union, also spoke in the meeting.

Comrade Sk. Kasim in his speech criticised the C.C.I. management for their anti-worker activities. He also criticised the recognised union of CCI 'Masdoor Sangha' for its anti-working class agreement with the management of C.C.I. and spinning Mills Ltd. Orissa.

Comrade Kasim demanded reinstatement of 700 workers of Orissa spinning Mills who were suspended and further demanded that the Government should take over the management of the spinning Mills and save the workers from miseries in these hard days.

Other speakers in their brief speeches cited the examples how the Government is curtailing the Trade Union rights and imposing the burden of the crisis of capitalism in India on the shoulder of the working class.

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee's letter

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attitude of the British imperialist Government.

Our Party strongly feels that all the Left-Democratic parties in India must immediately come forward to unitedly

organise a strong public opinion against the British Imperialist Government and demand of the Government of India to come out of the Commonwealth forthwith.

Hope, we will get your

best co-operation in this respect. Any one of the left parties may convene a meeting for this purpose or if you agree we can convene it at our Delhi Office. Awaiting prompt reply,

Comradely yours,
Nihar Mukherjee

Protest Demonstration in front of U.K. High Commission Office, Delhi by AIDS0 and DYO

Delhi, 18th May 1981:

Under the auspices of the Delhi units of AIDS0 and DYO, hundreds of students and youths staged a protest demonstration in front of the British High Commission Office against the autocratic policy of the British Imperialist Government towards the IRA prisoners.

Before proceeding towards the British High Commission Office the students and youths assembled at Teen Murti Bhawan Gate at 11 A.M. and held a brief meeting there. Comrade Pratap Samel, an AIDS0 organiser addressing the gathering, explained the conditions of the IRA prisoners who were on Hunger Strike, demanded immediate acceptance of the legitimate demands of the IRA prisoners and condemned the British Imperial rule, still continuing in Northern Ireland.

As the demonstration reached the British High Commission Office, it was stopped by the police cordon. Comrade O. P. Suman, Secretary AIDS0 unit Delhi addressed the gathering. Comrade Suman severely condemned the British Government for not granting political status to the IRA prisoners and held the Thatcher Government entirely responsible for the death of Bobby Sands and Francis Hughes. He demanded immediate redressal of the just and legitimate demands of the IRA prisoners and save the lives of other prisoners who were on Hunger Strike.

On behalf of the demonstrators, a delegation wanted to meet the High Commission and submit a memorandum to him personally, who refused to meet the delegation.

Comrades O. P. Suman and Manmohan who lead the delegation then met Mr. Clerk, a

representative of the British High Commission and handed over the memorandum to him.

Sever all connections with Commonwealth—AIDS0

Calcutta, 24th May 1981:

Comrade Chbaya Mukherjee, General Secretary, All India Democratic Student's Organisation, in a statement, supporting the legitimate struggle of the liberation fighters of Ireland, demanding political status, stated:

"The manner in which the liberation fighters of Ireland are conducting a life and death struggle for the redressal of their most legitimate demand like granting political status to IRA prisoners is undoubtedly a memorable phenomenon in the history of freedom struggle of the world. Moreover, the way four struggling lives were sacrificed, one by one, due to the autocratic policy of the British Imperialist Government, is also unprecedented in the history of the world and any democratic minded person, having even a little sense of human values cannot but shudder at this. We strongly condemn

this inhuman, autocratic attitude of the British Government.

"We also note with great shame and regret that when people all over the world are expressing their indignation against this inhuman attitude of the British Government, neither the Central Indira Government nor the 'Left Front' Government of West Bengal has, till today, made any official protest against this. This proves, once again, their compromising attitude towards imperialism.

"We demand that the Central Government of India must immediately sever all connections with the Commonwealth to register protest against this despicable act of the British Government. We urge upon all sections of the democratic minded people of the world to build up movement against the British Imperialist Government".

Public meeting in Bangalore

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intellectuals, writers, workers, peasants, women and all sections of the people under the banner of Shiksha Sankochan Birodhi O Swadhikar Raksha Committee forced upon the 'Left Front' govt to retrace its step. Even in Karnataka the Gokak Panel recommendations seek to denigrate the role of English. He appealed to the house to come

forward to uphold the two-language (Mother-tongue and English) Policy. Com. Sathyanarayana Murthy speaking on the occasion laid bare the recommendations of the Gokak Panel and warned of the danger if it was implemented. Wing Commander (rtd) B.V.R Rao, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Committee said that on the question of language all the parties—

Sukinda Upatyaka Mines' Workers' Union leads workers to victory

Acute hardship due to closure for more than 100 days, pressure tactics, murderous assaults by the hirelings of the contractor killing one and injuring many workers could not dampen the fighting spirit of the workers of Kalarangi Chromite Mines of Sukinda. Under the leadership of the Sukinda Upatyaka Mines' Workers' Union affiliated to UTUC (Lenin Sarani) conducted a glorious struggle for more than hundred days against the contractor-Congress (I) Government-corrupt officials of Orissa Mining Corporation combine.

At last on May 11th the contractor came to a settlement conceding to the demands of the workers.

To mark the victory of this glorious struggle on 18th May, a large meeting was held at Kalarangi largely attended by workers and general members of the public. The meeting was presided over by Comrade Bhiku Mohant a veteran peasant organiser of Sukinda, Vice-President of KKMS Orissa State Committee. Comrade Tapas Dutta, Secretary, Orissa State Committee SUCI in his address as the main speaker emphasised on the need of unity of the working people of all sections to lead their struggles

against all injustice, exploitation.

Comrade Dutta emphasised that parochialism, communalism, regionalism are the tools in the hands of the vested class, the capitalists, the jotedars to drive wedge in the struggling unity of the working people so that they cannot stand united and offer a resolute fight against exploitation and injustice and instead remain busy fighting each other.

Comrade Dutta congratulated the workers for their resolute fight, paid revolutionary homage to Comrade Budhiya Sethy, who met a martyr's death at the hands of the contractor management and Congress (I) Government combine. He called upon the workers not to fall victim to a lull and remain all the more vigilant and work hard to strengthen their organisation.

Comrade Mayadhar Nayak, General Secretary, Sukinda Upatyaka Mines' Workers' Union in his address stressed upon the point that the teaching of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great leader of the proletariat was the source of inspiration to the workers in their gallant united fight with honour and fortitude.

Before the meeting a well decorated procession paraded the mine area.

Public Meeting at Rajgunpur, Orissa

Sk. Ouasim, General Secretary of Orissa Spinning Mills Workers' Union, Rajgunpur in a public meeting at Rajgunpur Spinning Mill gate on 25.5.81 demanded immediate withdrawal of illegal suspension of production. At the same time he exposed the anti-labour activity of the management and urged the Government to set up a high level enquiry committee to enquire into the illegal suspension of production whether the Congress or the Janata or the BJP or the CPI(M) are the same.

and force the management to run the factory and save 800 workers from starvation. If the management shows its inability to run the factory, the government should take over and run the factory for the interest of the workers.

Correction

In our May 1, '81 issue, the number should be read—volume 14, No 15, the issue of May 16, '81 should be naturally,—Volume 14, No 17, the mistake is regretted.—Editorial Board, Proletarian Era.

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also built on a tricky ground. Rabindranath fought for the case of the mother tongue against the British imperialist policy of neglecting the indigenous languages of the land at that period. But did he speak against learning English? Did he not advocate study of English alongside of the mother tongue? Not only advocate, he wrote 4 or 5 English primers for his pupils at the elementary school level at Santiniketan. Every other day now an article or letter appears in the daily Press and magazines in which some or other among the intellectuals of West Bengal is exposing the falsity of the Front's propaganda relating to Rabindranath's view on learning of English. Gandhiji, too, while stressing the need to learn in the mother tongue, did not speak against learning English. The pioneers of the freedom movement had called for boycotting foreign goods and educational institutions, but never called for eschewing English. Because they fully realized the importance of English in the Indian Renaissance and independence movements. They were all educated in English and through English they had come in contact with the democratic concepts and values. The unforgettable role of English in the history of our freedom struggle can never be glossed over.

Distortion of the main issue has not been the Front's only recourse to falsehood. Without batting the eyelid its leaders are distorting facts and figures regarding study of English in the country and abroad. The falsity of their claim that English is not taught at the primary stage in most States of the country was pointed out by us previously. Actually, 14 among 21 States and all the Centrally administered territories begin English at some point at the primary stage. The more important point is, however, that the States which have removed English

Facing public criticism against its language and education policy the CPI(M) is distorting facts

from the primary stage have done so pursuant to the language policy of their Congress Governments. The CPI (M) led 'Left Front' today is swearing by these Congress (I) governed States as precedent. An unwitty confession indeed! Not only that. The Front is citing recommendations of the Education Commissions set up by the Centre to put into effect its education policy. But the Kothari Commission, too, which had suggested removal of English from the lower primary level, had recommended its retention from the higher primary level (Class III to V).

What is to be noted here is that the recommendations of the Kothari Commission are only the translated version of the education policy of the Congress. But the CPI(M), to prove its greater worth to the bourgeoisie, in hot eagerness, has gone further than the recommendation of the Kothari Commission even! What does this prove?

The urgency of self defence has led the Front leaders to employ analogy with foreign countries. Leaving aside the matter of falsity of their claim that no foreign country teaches a second language at the primary level, the logic of analogy should be kept in mind. Analogy is reasoning only if it is employed between cases under identical conditions. While seeking to draw a parallel on the issue of English between India and a foreign country one should be sure first if the four conditions basic to the issue of English in regard to India are also valid in the other country. One the multilingual character of the land. Two, a history of long foreign domination. Three intimate association of the foreign language in vital spheres of life of the country. Four, relative weakness of the indigen-

ous languages and their consequent inability to perform some vital roles which the foreign language is performing in the national life. Can the 'Left Front' show that these conditions characterising the Indian linguistic scene also obtain in the foreign countries with which they are drawing analogies?

The most noticeable feature of the Front's conduct in the face of people's protest is its continuously shifting line of argument. Had it taken its decision to eliminate English from primary education after taking into account the pros and cons in the people's interest—which it claims to have—its justification should have been consistent. But contrary is our experience with it. On 6th December, 1978, at the initial stage of the Front's language policy formulation, the Minister of Education for schools had made public the Front's intentions to abolish English at all levels of education stage by stage. Faced with people's protest and resentment the Government changed its stand, deciding to abolish the language at the primary stage only. The justification it had offered for this abolition was that English stood as a hurdle to the spread of primary education among the poor masses. Mr. Promode Disgupta, Polit Bureau member of the CPI (M) and Secretary of the party's West Bengal State unit, was audacious enough to suggest that workers and peasants had no necessity of learning English. The comment exposes what a poor view the CPI(M) leaders take really of the people's needs. But we know that it is the historical necessity of the proletariat to know truth concretely and meticulously and to learn the most advanced thoughts in all spheres of human knowledge in order to accomplish the tasks

of the proletarian revolution. Only English is capable of serving as the medium in our country to link ourselves with the most advanced thoughts of the world. The common people are aware of this necessity of English from their own experience. Condemnation of this slighting remark came instantaneously from them in the strongest terms. Besides, it does not take one long to realize that the real hurdle to universal literacy is the abject poverty of the masses, the child labour in particular, and by no means English. This iniquitous attempt to make English a scapegoat got soon exposed and the Front changed its argument offering a new justification that a second language at the primary level proved too much a load to bear with, hampering the child's mental growth.

Recourse to pleas as this indicates obviously the Front's anxiety to bypass the central question: Whether our people do not have a necessity for the English language. We discussed this basic point threadbare on many previous occasions. But it should serve to reemphasize here that for three basic reasons, namely, the question of unity among the people of this multilingual country, the question of access to higher thoughts and values in view of the weakness of our indigenous languages, and some vital spheres in national life, English is still indispensable. Advanced academic pursuits, scientific and technological works, trade and commerce, communication among the educated people with diverse mother tongues are some of these spheres. Those who argue that these spheres have no link with the common people's life and so English is not necessary for them actually seek to conceal the truth that the existing

system and the Government's education policy are denying the people this link. This is also an exploitation and denial of the scope of learning English to the people is service to the vested interests.

So judging by the total linguistic requirements in their life, if the people should learn English, a language which is so rich, international in use and gateway to knowledge for us, it is essential that they should learn it as part of their general linguistic equipment, as part of their general education, and with due care and attention from the very early stage. The question of load should be judged in this light and distributed over different stages of education according to relative importance of subjects to be learnt and the most advantageous Stage of learning of each subject. We discussed details of this point earlier and need not repeat here.

The Front's present position is no doubt more guarded: It acknowledges the importance of English for our people and argues that primary education, the main emphasis of its education policy, can be facilitated if it is given in one language only—the mother tongue. After acquiring proficiency in the mother tongue the child can learn English from the secondary stage more profitably. Moreover, the village child's surroundings offer him no opportunity to learn English through use, making class room teaching of the language an exercise in futility.

Clearly, this stance has been taken after getting a rebuff from the people. But in essence it is not only the same as before but more deceptive, because, to argue that primary education will be facilitated in the mother tongue only is to reason that the presence of English in the primary syllabus is a hindrance. But more outrageous is the denial of English to the village child on the plea that it is absent in

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ON LIC MOVEMENT

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to pay two years' arrear Bonus to LIC employees. Imposing the Ordinance it fixed the rate of Bonus and DA and thus launched a direct attack on the trade union rights. The spontaneous resentment and the demand for organising a movement put the leadership in a predicament. So, both the leadership wanted to kill two birds with one stone. They filed a stay petition before the Supreme Court and gave the call of a continuous strike from 2nd April. They said that for the protection of trade union rights the employees will have to launch a movement. But in fact they were eagerly looking forward towards the decision of stay order that can give them an escape route for calling off the strike and yet show how militant they are. That is why even though this was the first prolonged strike struggle in LIC, they made no necessary organisational preparation for that. The Supreme Court changed the date of hearing and the stay order for conditional payment of Bonus was issued on 2nd April, the day the strike started. In the meantime the leaders themselves pleaded to the Supreme Court for a conditional payment of bonus. But when despite the Supreme Court Order the Government did not respond the leaders of the CPI union preferred to remain silent. The General Secretary of the CPI(M) union Mr. Saroj Choudhury, convening a meeting on behalf of the unions said that the Supreme Court verdict must not create any illusion—one cannot hope that the Government would so readily respond besides, not bonus but retention of trade union rights was the main object of struggle. It is to be noted here that with the object of giving a severe blow to the employees' united movement the Central Government in its 1981-82 Budget Policy declared its decision to divide the LIC into five zones and autonomous

bodies. Mr. Saroj Choudhury in his speech urged the employees to organise struggle also against this decision of the Government. But when the Supreme Court in its verdict on 15th April reiterated the old verdict and ordered the Government to immediately make conditional payment of bonus within seven days, leaders of all the unions, without exception immediately called off the strike and started making 'victory celebration'.

Even though the Government ultimately made the payment but the manner in which it tried to frustrate the verdict of the Supreme Court and for that even used the Presidential position—all are aware of that history.

But was bonus the main point of contention and only issue before the LIC employees and the country? Each and every conscious trade union worker as well as the LIC employees knew that the main object of the LIC movement was the retention of trade union rights. But the way the leadership, just at the reiteration of the old verdict of the Supreme Court, called off the strike and started to paint this as a "great victory", it seems that to the LIC leadership getting bonus and the preservation of trade union rights are one and the same thing. But the reality is this that even though the enactment of the LIC Act and the Gazettee Notification are stayed by the order of the Supreme Court the Act is still in vogue and under adjudication. What the employees only got is bonus, that too conditional, that is, if the employees get defeated in the Supreme Court they will have to return the excess amount from what they get now. And supposing they are not to return anything from the bonus amount it will mean at best that they have got what they were entitled to as per the old agreement. They will have to fight again to

retain this benefit of bonus. And yet from the clamour of 'great victory' of the leaders, it may appear to the people that the issue has been clinched to the satisfaction of the employees' demand. Does it not reveal the anti-movement, compromising bankrupt outlook of the leadership?

The CPI leadership is claiming that it is their victory since it is they who went first to the Supreme Court. The CPI(M) leadership is claiming that it is not CPI unions' victory alone, they too have equal (or more than equal?) share in the victory! But both are silent about restoration of D.A. slab at the maximum in place of proposed reduced rate, settlement of new charter of demands and above all the revocation of the most authoritarian LIC Act that threatens the basic trade union rights of the employees. In all these vital issues they, in reality, depend absolutely on the good grace of the court's verdict. That is to say instead of rousing the employees' fighting spirit and giving it an organised shape, they have pushed them to the blind alley of legalism.

Both CPI and CPI(M) as political parties and the unions led by them in LIC have thus actually helped the government to push through with its plan. Concrete events will bear testimony to this. The Government of India and the LIC management all wanted to keep the whole attention of the employees as also of the people confined within a single issue i.e. payment of arrear bonus. The national press also gave the impression that as if that was the only issue. The opposition MP's not only the stalwarts of CPI and CPI(M) gave fiery speeches inside the Parliament but they were all for payment of arrear bonus. That is to say, as if in well orchestrated unison, every body, the management, the government, CPI, CPI (M) stalwarts in parliament made the payment of arrear bonus

the sole issue. And when that came in conditional manner the trade union leadership of these two parties, as if in waiting for it, called it a 'great victory' and lost not a single moment to withdraw the movement. Where were their enlightened discourses on the graver issues hanging over the heads of the employees? Were these all then pseudo militancy, to deceive the employees? Otherwise how can they explain their behaviours? They did nothing to bring to the working people the grave danger against basic trade union rights contained in the authoritarian LIC Act and that unless it is fought back by the collective might of the working people, the entire working class movement will be the casualty. That this is no fiction but is the stark reality will be obvious from the concerted move of the monopolists and the government spokesmen to bring industrial truce by the backdoor, evolving a consensus among the five Central Trade Unions viz. CITU, AITUC, BMS, HMS and INTUC. This is the reason why the leaderships left open the door of withdrawal of the movement in LIC by making the payment of arrear bonus the bargain issue. But even here they had no faith in movement. They had real faith in court's verdict but just to keep a show of militancy, they took the programme of strike in a routine manner, as if a mark time programme, till the court pronounces its judgment. They may think that by being clever they may hoodwink the employees. But the entire tone and tenor of the movement, the behaviours of the leaders left very few employees in doubt as to the real intention of the leadership. Fervour and spontaneity which were the characteristic features in the movements of LIC employees in the past were conspicuous by their absence this time. And just like the curtain was drawn over the 77 day long strike of the 80,000

public sector bodies employees after one day All India Strike on 11th March, the 14 day long strike of LIC employees came to an end on the day the solidarity programme of after office hour demonstration by central and other trade unions was staged. In fact on 15th April when this solidarity programme was going on in Calcutta, the leaders were sitting in New Delhi to prepare the declaration for withdrawal of movement!

We appeal to our LIC brother not to forget for a moment that their struggle has not ended. It cannot end when the government is moving with the sinister design of robbing them of their basic trade union rights, their hard earned economic gains, their striking power by dividing their strength into five zones under five independent bodies and when settlement of their charter remains long overdue. The social democratic leaderships of their unions want to avoid a mighty movement when they, the employees, were and even now are ready for that. Without this mighty movement, they cannot hope to win their cause simply by depending on legalism. Social democracy, in all countries and in history always misdirected the movement by diverting the attention from the real issue. In LIC they have done exactly the same. LIC employees will have to heighten their consciousness to defeat the treachery of social democracy to guard their own vital interest.

LANGUAGE

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his environment. Marxists never judge the issue of environment in this way. Because, if we accept this 'logic', we can never expect to introduce anything which is lacking in an environment although the urge for it may be too evident. How can the Front talk of making the village child literate while literacy is absent in his environment? How can the light of education

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Spread Language Movement in every direction

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reach a family in which there is no education? This is vulgarisation of Marxism. The masqueraders of Marxism would not judge the issue of English in the yardstick of historical necessity or people's urge for it. Most unashamedly they use the people's deprived condition regarding English as the plea to deny them further the right to learn the language. This is the CPI (M)-led 'Left Front'! These people are removing English from the primary level making it a plea that many children fail in the language but it is also they who have adopted the policy of not detaining any at this level for failure in any subject. This will of course help them achieve the goal of universal primary education, because, learning or no learning, everybody becomes entitled to get an official stamp of education of the primary level.

It is impossible to realize where the contradiction lies between learning in the mother tongue and learning English alongside of the mother tongue. It is a universal experience and a scientific finding, too, that the childhood is the best time to learn one or more languages easily and quickly, because children have the maximum adaptability. Bypassing these clear truths, the 'Left Front' is pointing to this or that as the obstacle to education of the people. It should also be realized that apart from the basic economic and social causes the lack of a proper atmosphere is also responsible for the poor state of education in our country. We need more schools, competent teachers, improved facilities and, above all, a moral and ethical standard to guide the teachers, students and guardians. Those who are busy fulfilling their

petty party interest by placing partymen in schools and colleges are only vitiating this atmosphere further. And no wonder that they take recourse to false pleas to suppress the truth.

There was a time when these parties used to call English a foreign language and therefore to be done away with. During the present movement, too, some of these leaders sought to argue that English education had given birth to a privileged section in the country and it was this section which was resisting the Front's language policy. But is it not the truth that denial of access to English education to the majority of our people, by the British rulers first and then the Congress Governments, gave rise to a privileged section? Does not the 'Left Front's' language policy seek to aggravate the division into two categories of citizens—an English-knowing privileged minority and an English-denied majority? Who stand today against perpetuation of this privilege—the 'Left Front' or the **Committee to Resist Curtailment of Education and Encroachment on Autonomy**?

Leaders of the Front have been also heard to argue that English is an imperialist language. We need remind them only what Comrade Stalin had observed regarding the place of language in society.

"Language is not a product of one or another base, old or new, within the given society, but of the whole course of the history of the society and of the history of the bases for many centuries. It was created not by some one class but by the entire society, by all the classes of the society, by the efforts of hundreds of generations. It was created for the satisfaction of the needs not of one particular class,

but of the entire society, of all the classes of the society. ...Hence the functional role of language as a means of intercourse between people consists not in serving one class to the detriment of other classes, but in equally serving the entire society, all the classes of society. This fact explains why a language may equally serve both the old, moribund system and the new rising system, both the old base and the new base, both the exploiters and the exploited.

...Hence (a) A Marxist cannot regard language as a superstructure on the base.

(b) To confuse language and superstructure is to commit a serious error,...

(c) ...The "class character" of language formula is erroneous and non Marxist."

More words beyond this inimicable exposition by Comrade Stalin are unnecessary. There are, however, intellectuals who consider continuation of English in our country a sign of cultural dependence of the colonial legacy. These people fail to realize that it is the slavish cultural makeup and inferiority complex of a small section of anglicized people who regard the ability to imitate the English bourgeois manners as supreme accomplishment that is the sign of cultural dependence and not the people's urge for learning English. The question of retention of English as a historical necessity should not be confused with this slavish mentality. The leaders of our renaissance and independence movement were certainly not slavish, but they were all educated in English.

The question thus assuming significance here is why the 'Left Front' has been shifting its line of argument continually. The Front had not consulted educationists or organizations concerned with education before taking these vital policy decisions. It had not given its justification, too,

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

English has never been an obstacle to the growth of any Indian language. In fact, they have all flourished with the aid of English. Newspapers, magazines, novels and short stories have all developed to enormous lengths in all Indian languages. All our Indian Languages owe to English the marks of punctuation, the exclamatory and the question marks. Mother tongue has to be taught, but in the present Indian context, there is a limit to its extension. Excessive linguism will spell the ruin of India. To keep united and progressive, to develop a scientific attitude among the people, to lead the country towards better democracy, continued association with English is an absolute necessity. To fight the evils of

casteism and communalism to foster secularism and socialism, and to modernise the country on the basis of equality, English will be the grand recipe. The world under modern science has become small and the various countries of the globe have become wholly inter-dependent and to serve such a changed world, an international language that has been universally accepted is very necessary. We have in English, which has been bequeathed to us by historical circumstances, such a language; and it would be sheer madness to throw away this great gift. In this connection, the agitation of the SUCI and Bengali intellectuals to retain English is most welcome.

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before the people had raised their voice of protest. Even when appeals were made to reconsider its decision the Front betrayed only intolerance of opposition.

In the Front's assessment of the people's educational needs, clearly, English has no place in the basic education for our people. Guided by this attitude it had taken its decision on English first and its arguments were a later device meant for people's consumption. If the Front really believed in what it offers as justification, the CPI (M) Education Minister would not have first told about eliminating English from all levels stage by stage and then revise this stand in the face of people's protest. Where is the guarantee that the Front would not proceed in the future to implement its design?

Time and again we have pointed out the essential identity of the language and education policy of the CPI (M) led 'Left Front' and that of the Congress of all forms, Mrs. Gandhi did not really object to the Front's

decision on English. She made education a target of attack to use it only as a lever in the Congress (I)'s parliamentary fight against the CPI (M) to cash in on the people's resentments. The Front's fight against the Congress (I) is guided by the same parliamentary object. What has this mock fight to do with the people's vital concern in education, culture and other spheres of life?

The coming days are vitally important for the movement. The Front Government has only stopped for a while, but not retreated. If it succeeds in implementing its policy, other states of the country will follow suit, bringing similar or even more anti-people education and language policies. So, the people of West Bengal have another historic task to achieve. They must rally under the **Committee's** banner in greater numbers and stronger resolve to lift this movement to higher stages of resistance to frustrate the sinister design of the 'Left Front' Government of the State.

Editor-in-Chief—NIHAR MUKHERJEE